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Department of State

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ACTION RP-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 ADS-00 SR-04 IO-14 HA-05 AID-07
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DEPARTMENT PASS TO AMB PALMIERI

FROM AMABASSADOR LOY

E.O. 12065: GDS 2/7/80 (KING, B.) OR-M
TAGS: SREF, PK

SUBJECT: SUMMARY REPORT ON AFGHAN REFUGEE CAMPS AND RELIEF
EFFORT

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR	
REVIEWED BY	DATE
REASON FOR EXEMPTION. DATE	
TE AUTH.	REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS	<input type="checkbox"/>
DECLASSIFIED & RELEASABLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
RELEASE DENIED	<input type="checkbox"/>
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS	

1. (C) ENTIRE TEXT.

2. MISSION COMPLETED. AT PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY
GAVE OUR CONCLUSIONS (SEE BELOW) AND ANNOUNCED NEW
ASSISTANCE ITEMS (REF B) AS WELL AS DESCRIBING OVERALL
\$21 MILLION US ASSISTANCE EFFORT. LATTER HAD NOT BEEN
COVERED HERE BEFORE. COVERAGE OF PRESS CONFERENCE GOOD
AND QUITE ACCURATE. OUR BOTTOM LINE IS AS FOLLOWS:

3. THE 500,000 REFUGEES CONSTITUTE AN ENORMOUS HUMAN
TRAGEDY. PROUD PEOPLE RIPPED FROM HOME, LANDS, LIVESTOCK,
JOBS TO LIVE IN ABSOLUTELY PRIMITIVE CIRCUMSTANCES WITH
MINIMAL GOODS. LEVEL OF DISCOMFORT AND SUFFERING IS HIGH.
HOWEVER, WE DID NOT FIND FAMINE, WIDESPREAD ACUTE
MALNUTRITION OR
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STANDARDS THAT ARE NORM FOR RELEVANT PARTS OF AFGHANISTAN
AND PAKISTAN, AND CAN REASONABLY BE EXPECTED IN SUCH CAMPS.)

4. ONLY REASONS WE HAVE NOT HAD A MAJOR DISASTER HERE ARE (I) THE FACT THAT AFGHAN REFUGEES BELONG TO TRIBES THAT ARE ALSO FOUND IN PAKISTAN, AND THAT TRIBESEMEN TAKE CARE OF THEIR TRIBAL KIN; (II) THE TOUGHNESS AND DISCIPLINE OF AFGHANS; (III) THE RELIEF EFFORTS OF GOP.

5. GOP RELIEF EFFORT WORKS VERY UNRELIABLY. UP TO RECENTLY GOP DISTRIBUTED CASH (IN THEORY) OF FOUR RUPEES PER DAY PER PERSON, AND REFUGEES BOUGHT THEIR SUPPLIES. SINCE 11 JAN THE CASH HAS BEEN REDUCED TO FIFTY RUPEES PER MONTH AND EACH REFUGEE IN ADDITION GETS UN-PRESCRIBED QUANTITIES OF WHEAT, DRIED MILK, VEGETABLE OILS AND BEANS. BOTH MONEY AND COMMODITIES ARE NOT GETTING THROUGH REGULARLY OR IN FULL. BUT WE BELIEVE THIS WILL MORE OR LESS STRAIGHTEN OUT, AS PIPELINE FILLS AND BUREAUCRATIC KINKS ARE WORKED OUT. WE CONCLUDE THAT WE NEED NOT TAKE ANY IMMEDIATE ACTION RE FOOD DISTRIBUTION, WITH IMPORTANT EXCEPTION THAT WE WANT TO CHECK (DIRECTLY AND VIA UN) THAT DISTRIBUTION PROBLEMS ARE IN FACT BEING RESOLVED.

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6. WE CONTINUE TO HAVE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS OF PROTECTION FROM ELEMENTS. OUR BLANKETS AND TENTS THAT WE HAVE COMMITTED FOR WILL HELP. THIS IS ADMINISTRATIVELY RELATIVELY EASY PROBLEM TO SOLVE.

7. BIG PROBLEM IS HEALTH. DR. MARIE GRIFFIN, WHO ACCOMPANIED US, FINDS IT HARD TO TALK MEANINGFULLY ABOUT MORTALITY OR MORBIDITY RATES, BECAUSE RECORDS ARE BAD OR NONEXISTENT. BUT ITS CLEAR THAT HEALTH PROBLEM IS AHEAD. WHEN HOT WEATHER STRIKES, THE SANITATION CONDITIONS WILL

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CAUSE PROBLEMS, AND IF THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES INCREASES, ALL PROBLEMS BECOME WORSE. CHANCES FOR FUTURE EPIDEMICS ARE HIGH.

8. DEALING WITH HEALTH RISKS IS OUR MOST DIFFICULT NEAR TERM PROBLEM. WE INTEND TO TACKLE IT ON SEVERAL FRONTS: MORE MEDICINE; SAFER WATER SUPPLIES; IMPROVED SANITATION; BETTER HEALTH DELIVERY THROUGH MOBIL UNITS, ETC. BIGGEST PROBLEM IS INADEQUATE HEALTH MANPOWER AND GOP STRONG RESISTANCE TOWARD USING FOREIGN HEALTH PERSONNEL. LATTER IS LIKELY TO BE POINT OF CONTENTION FOR SOME TIME. I TRIED OUR OFFER TO FINANCE MOBIL UNITS TO SOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM.

9. GOP ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY FOR REFUGEE RELIEF NOT STRONG, BUT PROBABLY IMPROVING.

10. UNHCR ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY NOW IN PRETTY GOOD SHAPE, WITH ADEQUATE STAFFING TABLE AND POSITIONS BEING FILLED QUICKLY. ENORMOUS CHANGE FROM SITUATION THREE WEEKS AGO AND EVEN ONE WEEK AGO.

11. AS REPORTED SEPTEL, EMBASSY WAS SUCCESSFUL IN BREAKING LOOSE, IN PRINCIPLE, \$5 MILLION IN US-OWNED RUPEES. WE HAVE DISCUSSED HOW TO FIX MECHANICS OF RELEASE OF THESE FUNDS. IF, BUT ONLY IF, GOP IS FORTHCOMING ON THESE USES
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THE RUPEES WILL BE BIG HELP.

12. QUESTION OF ACTUAL NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN IS DIFFICULT TO PIN DOWN. A TOTAL OF 470,000 ARE REGISTERED. THERE IS SOME INCENTIVE ON PART OF REFUGEES TO OVERSTATE HANDS, AND SOME RISK OF MODEST DOUBLE COUNTING. AT SAME TIME, WE KNOW THERE ARE MANY UNREGISTERED REFUGEES. ON BALANCE WE BELIEVE ACTUAL NUMBER IS HIGHER, AND WE ARE USING 500,000 AS WORKING NUMBER. WE ARE CERTAIN THIS WILL GROW MASSIVELY IN SPRING UNLESS CONDITIONS CHANGE RADICALLY.

13. CHRIS HOLMES IS REMAINING ISLAMABAD THRU FRIDAY TO PUT TOGETHER FULLER REPORT. RON DAVIDSON GOING TO GENEVA FOR FOLLOW UP WITH RELEVANT GENEVA-BASED AGENCIES. DR. GRIFFIN WILL REMAIN ISLAMABAD FOR SHORT PERIOD TO HELP SET UP SIMPLE MONITORING SYSTEM FOR DEATHS AND BERTHS.

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